

Black Panther

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Boseman as the eponymous superhero, opens on Feb. 16, picking up the adventures of the newly crowned African king and superhero who debuted in 2016's "Captain America: Civil War."

Existing in the same shared universe as Iron Man, the Hulk, Captain America and Spiderman, the Panther, however, the Black Panther's adventures center around his futuristic hidden homeland of Wakanda, considered to be the most technologically advanced nation on Marvel's earth. In the new movie, T'Challa, the Black Panther's real name, must battle long-time adversaries with the aid of his all-female bodyguards and a CIA agent to maintain



This image released by Disney and Marvel Studios' shows Lupita Nyong'o, from left, Chadwick Boseman and Danai Gurira in a scene from "Black Panther," in theaters on Feb. 16, 2018.

collegiate fraternity founded on the concept of African fraternalism, in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Intentional Community Building Collective and Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle in Baltimore, are assembling discussion panels on the movie's themes.

Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the minds

superheroes in "Meteor Man" — but their movies did not bring out the enthusiasm that the Black Panther is seeing.

"What is significant now, however, is that this age of convergence of film franchises with social media, a black superhero movie with an almost all-black cast conveys power, that we

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control of his country and prevent a world war.

Directed by Ryan Coogler, it also has an all-star cast including Angela Bassett, Lupita Nyong'o, Michael B. Jordan, Forest Whitaker, Danai Gurira, Sterling K. Brown and more.

For many people, the Black Panther movie isn't just a movie; it's a symbol of change.

"Black Panther' is just going to be really special. ... I don't plug into film anticipation. But I can feel it. A lot of my friends have asked me to go to the premiere! Everyone in my network is excited about it, and you can feel it when they're not," Daniel Kaluuya, the "Get Out" star who also is featured in "Black Panther," told The Associated Press recently.

The internet explodes each time a new trailer, poster or piece of artwork debuts from the movie, sparking hashtags like #BlackPantherSoLit and #WelcometoWakanda. Twitter declared that Black Panther was one of the most tweeted-about movies of 2017, and the only movie on the list that hadn't premiered yet.

"Do we really have to wait until February!" lamented Elwood L. Robinson, chancellor of Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on Twitter while sporting a Black Panther T-shirt.

Groups like MALIK Fraternity Inc., the first

behind Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four and other Marvel comics, the Black Panther holds a unique position in comic book history. While not the first black comic book hero — the first Black character to headline his own comic book was Dell Comics' Western hero and gunfighter Lobo in 1965 — the Black Panther is considered the first Black superhero, introduced as a supporting character in Fantastic Four in 1966 and later featured in his own book.

There has been a renaissance with black superheroes on television as well. "Black Lightning" debuts on the CW on January 16 featuring an educator who gains electrical powers and becomes a superhero. "Luke Cage," a television show about a former convict with superhuman strength and unbreakable skin, premiered on Netflix in 2016 and will begin a second season later this year.

Cage debuted in a self-titled comic book "Luke Cage, Hero for Hire" in 1972 with an exaggerated Afro and a catchphrase "Sweet Christmas!" He was followed by Black Lightning in a DC comic book in 1977.

There have been other black superhero movies — Wesley Snipes starred as the vampire slayer Blade in one of the first Marvel movies, and Robert Townsend starred in a comedic parody of

have arrived. It's evolution," said Christopher Chambers, a Georgetown University media studies professor.

AP Film Writer Jake Coyle contributed to this report.

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FILM REVIEW: Oldman Channels Churchill in 'Darkest Hour'



The Darkest Hour'

by Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Curiously, "Darkest Hour" and "Dunkirk" basically cover the same ground, namely, Winston Churchill's (Gary Oldman) first month as Prime Minister of Great Britain. When he was sworn in on May 10, 1940, the country was at war with Germany which had already conquered most of Europe and was just starting to invade Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

Churchill's predecessor, Neville Chamberlain (Ronald Pickup) had unsuccessfully employed a diplomatic policy of appeasement which had only served to embolden Hitler. And soon after entering office, Winston found himself facing a daunting task once the Nazis' blitzkrieg had broken through the Maginot Line.

Suddenly, the Allied forces were in full retreat, including hundreds of thousands of British soldiers. They were being driven to the sea, where they would be sitting ducks for the Luftwaffe.

Now, where Dunkirk focused on the evacuation of the troops by an impromptu flotilla of private citizens,

Darkest Hour narrowly focuses on Churchill's leadership and oratory skills. After all, it was no mean feat to convince a woefully-equipped nation that it could successfully ramp up its defenses to take on the ravenous war machine practically on its doorstep.

Directed by Joe Wright ("Atonement"), "Darkest Hour" does a magnificent job of plumbing the depths of Churchill's psyche as well as recreating a number of his inspirational speeches, concluding with his historic "We shall never surrender!" address delivered to Parliament on June 4.

Unfortunately, "Darkest Hour" pales in comparison to the visually-captivating "Dunkirk." Too bad the introspective and action-oriented productions weren't spliced together. Nevertheless, Gary Oldman might finally win the Oscar that has long eluded him for his sterling portrayal of the British Bulldog.

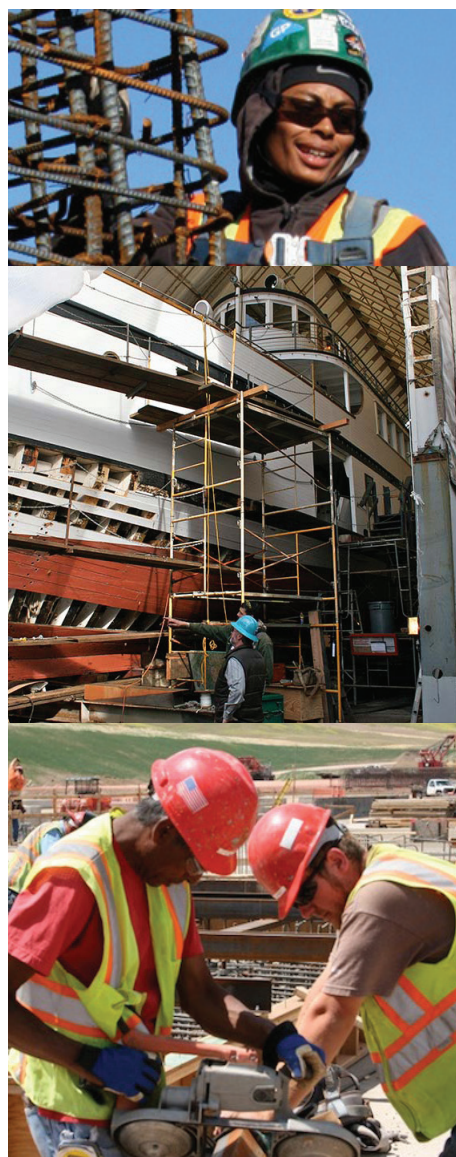
Excellent ★★★★★

Rated PG-13 for mature themes

Running time: 125 minutes

Production Studio: Working Title Films / Perfect World Pictures

To see a trailer for Darkest Hour, go to TheSkanner.com.



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